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ABSTRACT

In September 1985, the New Mexico Community College Task Force was created by the New Mexico Association of Community and Junior Colleges to conduct a coordinated statewide information campaign about the educational programs and services provided by the state's 17 two-year colleges; and to address the critical issues facing these institutions. This report provides a summary of the activities of the Task Force between September and December, 1985. Following an explanation of why the Task Force was created, the report identifies nine issues facing the community colleges and offers a series of related recommendations for improving institutional growth and development. The issues and recommendations focus on the community colleges' mission; the associate degree; funding; educational quality; governance; tuition; linkages with high schools, business, industry and government; marketing; and articulation. A list of task force members is followed by a section detailing task force activities during the 3-month period, including meetings, media contacts, speaking engagements, advertising, college contacts, legislative contacts, and informal surveys. Appendices provide employment projections, and a fact sheet on New Mexico's community colleges. (LAL)

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The New Mexico Community College Task Force

ED264902

Final Report
December, 1985

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A Project Of:
The New Mexico Association
of Community and Junior Colleges

NEW MEXICO COMMUNITY COLLEGE TASK FORCE

FINAL REPORT

New Mexico Association of Community and Junior Colleges
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UNM Valencia Campus
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Santa Fe Community College
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Santa Fe Community College

December, 1985

New Mexico Community College Task Force

P.O. Box 4187
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(505) 471-8200, ext. 7

December 18, 1985

Dear Colleague:

This report is the culmination of the New Mexico Community College Task Force's activities. In it you will find an explanation of why the Task Force was created and a summary of its activities over the past three months.

Most importantly, this report identifies nine critical issues facing New Mexico's community colleges and vocational schools and presents recommendations which Task Force members believe will promote the positive growth and development of these two-year institutions.

Finally, the Task Force has concluded that its work is not done. Information about the state's community colleges and vocational schools must continually be shared with New Mexico's citizens in order to maintain a heightened awareness of these two-year institutions.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this report further, call me or Task Force staff members Tina Ludutsky-Taylor or Debra Halsey. They can be reached at 471-8200. My number is listed below. You may also wish to contact your local Task Force representatives who are identified in this report.

Thank you for your interest and continued support.

Sincerely,

A. Samuel Adelo

A. Samuel Adelo, Chair
New Mexico Community College Task Force
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Santa Fe, NM 87501

ASA:bb

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I. WHY THE TASK FORCE WAS CREATED

The New Mexico Community College Task Force was created in September 1985 by the New Mexico Association of Community and Junior Colleges (NMACJC).

It was established to achieve two major goals:

- to conduct a coordinated statewide information campaign about the educational programs and services provided by the state's 17 two-year community colleges and vocational schools. The NMACJC, whose members include all 17 of these institutions, believes the two-year institutions are New Mexico's "best kept secret."

- to address the critical issues facing the state's two-year community colleges and vocational schools. This is especially important in order to respond to questions regarding the quality of higher education in New Mexico.

As a result of their work, Task Force members identified nine critical issues and developed recommendations which they believe will promote the positive growth and development of New Mexico's community colleges and vocational schools.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE

MISSION

1. **Community colleges and vocational schools must remain comprehensive in order to fulfill their mission of serving the diverse needs of their communities.**

   Community colleges and vocational schools are designed to help local citizens achieve their personal educational goals and to meet the job training needs of local business, industry and government. The comprehensive community college offers freshman and sophomore level courses with credits that transfer to four-year colleges and universities; vocational/technical programs that provide students with basic job skills to enter the work force; Adult Basic Education and developmental education to help students acquire basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics; and non-credit community services and continuing education programs for students of all ages seeking professional or personal enrichment.

2. **Community colleges and vocational schools should be recognized as a vital, integral part of the state's system of higher education, equally as important as the state's kindergarten-12th grade and university systems.**

   An educated populace and a suitably trained work force are essential for the continued development of New Mexico. The kindergarten-12th grade, community college and university systems each play an important role in educating the citizens of the state. The kindergarten-12th grade system lays the foundation of basic educational skills which makes life-long learning possible. The community college system

helps citizens achieve their personal educational goals and attain the comprehensive technological skills necessary for employment in a broad range of occupations in a rapidly changing society. The university system provides advanced training and research opportunities required in certain fields.

3. **Community colleges should be recognized as an economically efficient way to deliver freshman and sophomore level college course work.**

Over half of the entering freshmen in all institutions of higher learning nationwide begin their college careers in community colleges or vocational schools. In New Mexico, only 19 percent of the entering freshmen start at a community college or vocational school. If more students in New Mexico were to begin college at a two-year institution, it would save the state money. For example, the average state appropriation per full-time equivalent (FTE) student in New Mexico community colleges is about $2,750, compared with about $4,240 at the state's four-year institutions. Two-year institutions are also economical to students. Tuition at community colleges is affordable, ranging from $0-$13 per credit hour. In addition, community colleges do a remarkable job of teaching students with deficiencies in basic skills, and community college students have a high success rate when they transfer to four-year institutions.

4. **While universities are raising their admission requirements, community colleges and vocational schools must maintain their open admissions policy to serve people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to pursue a postsecondary education.**

The majority of community college students are non-traditional. Thirty percent of the nation's adult population did not graduate from high school, and many will turn to the community college to complete their education. Eighty to 90 percent of all minorities enrolled in American higher education take their first two years of study in community colleges. Seventy percent of returning women students have their first experience in a community college. Typical community college students are 29 years old and attend college in their own hometown while working and raising a family.

5. **New Mexico's vocational schools, which do not currently grant college credit, should investigate the possibility of offering college credit and the associate degree. Albuquerque, as the state's largest population center, should have a two-year, degree-granting institution.**

Many of the fastest growing technical occupations through 1995 will require an associate degree. The associate degree provides students with basic technical skills coupled with a general education background which better prepares the student to enter and advance in the work force or transfer to a four-year institution.

6. **The emphasis of community college and vocational school instructors must be on teaching rather than research or publication.**

Community colleges and vocational schools must focus on teaching the competencies required for students to cope with a rapidly changing environment.

Research at community colleges is encouraged, not at the expense of teaching, but to enhance it. Information gained from research is incorporated into the classroom to improve teaching.

Many community college instructors are professionals working in their field who are dedicated to teaching the tools of their trade.

THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE

1. **Community colleges and vocational schools must better inform people about the two-year associate degree and should encourage employers to recognize the associate degree and certificate as a minimum qualification in appropriate job categories.**

The associate degree has been in existence for 85 years but has not become well known until the past 20. This degree indicates that the holder has developed proficiencies sufficient to prepare for upper-division college work or to enter directly into a specific occupation. During the last decade the number of associate degrees awarded increased by approximately 60 percent, compared with an increase of 11 percent for the baccalaureate degree.

The number of jobs that require some college education is projected to increase by 45 percent through 1995 compared with the 25 percent growth projected for all jobs over this same period. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 18 of the 20 fastest growing occupations through 1995 are occupations for which some postsecondary education and training, but not necessarily a baccalaureate degree, are preferred or required (see Attachment A). The New Mexico Employment Security Department reports that 39 of the 46 occupations that have the largest number of annual job openings require two years or less of postsecondary training (see Attachment B). The arrival of the information age and the consequent need for technician-level educational programs will continue to spur the growth and recognition of the associate degree.

FUNDING

1. **The State of New Mexico should provide sources for adequate and equitable funding to support the comprehensive mission of the state's community colleges and vocational schools.**

2. **The state should develop a stable funding base in the present funding formula to cover such expenses as insurance, maintenance, equipment replacement, physical plant, library, student services and institutional support.**

Currently, these expenses fall under the "General" category of the funding formula and fluctuate with enrollment. However, the need for these services remains constant regardless of the number of students enrolled.

3. **The "Instruction" category of the funding formula which covers teaching expenses should remain enrollment driven.**

Instructional costs do fluctuate with enrollment.

4. **The state should provide a separate funding cluster in the funding formula for developmental education.**

The current two-year funding formula does not recognize that developmental education programs are generally more expensive to operate because they require small classes and individualized instruction.

Developmental education programs are vital to the success of the community college's open admissions policy. The emphasis in developmental education is on diagnosis, prescription and program placement. Developmental education programs help individuals develop the proficiency to be life-long learners and remove the educational barriers that impede progress toward their goals.

5. **The state should develop an additional factor in the funding formula to support expenditures required in the operation of an independent community college.**

Independent community colleges need adequate financial resources to maintain their administrative structure (e.g. business office, bookstore, etc.). Branch colleges are provided with an administrative structure by their parent institution.

6. **Salary factors in the present funding formula are low and should be adjusted upward to reflect actual salaries institutions must pay in order to attract and retain qualified personnel.**

Quality educational programs require professional, qualified faculty and staff. Salaries must be commensurate with experience and expertise and competitive with other employers.

7. **Current mill levies are equitable and should be maintained. The state should continue to provide a portion of the financial support to community colleges and vocational schools.**

Currently, branch community colleges are supported by a one mill levy, independent community colleges by a two mill levy, and technical/vocational schools by a three mill levy. These assessments are equitable based on the costs of providing their respective educational programs: branch colleges receive administrative support from their parent institution so they require a lower mill levy; community colleges must provide their own administrative support services so they require a higher level of local support; and vocational schools do not charge tuition so they require the greatest amount of local funding. It should also be noted that two-year institutions receive additional local support through capital outlay bond issues approved by local voters.

Because they provide vital educational services to the citizens of the state and contribute to economic development, community colleges and vocational schools should continue to receive some financial support from the state.

8. **Non-credit community services programs should remain self-supporting.**

QUALITY

1. **Because they are open admissions institutions, community colleges and vocational schools should concentrate their efforts on developing and maintaining exit standards. Institutions should conduct "Learning Outcomes Studies" in which they identify and clearly define what competencies students should have upon graduation.**

   Community colleges and vocational schools must ensure that they are teaching the skills required in a rapidly changing world. Information gathered from "Learning Outcomes Studies" should be part of a comprehensive educational program evaluation process and utilized in program improvement. By conducting these studies, community colleges and vocational schools can become more accountable and answer questions being raised nationally and locally about the quality of higher education.

2. **Staff development programs should be developed and maintained to enhance the skills of all staff members. Special emphasis should be placed on programs for part-time faculty.**

   Quality educational programs are dependent upon a well-trained, expert staff. Staff development programs are essential for continued growth and development. Because community colleges and vocational schools rely heavily on part-time faculty, it is particularly important that continuing education programs be available to them.

3. **Community colleges and vocational schools need to gather reliable data on current and former students in order to measure their success in college and on the job.**

   Many two-year institutions are weak in gathering statistics on their students. Better information is needed on why students leave college, how well they do after transferring to four-year institutions, how successful they are in finding jobs, and how satisfied employers are with their job performance.

   By measuring the success of their students, community colleges and vocational schools can 1) better evaluate the quality of their programs, 2) determine whether or not they are meeting their students' needs, and 3) determine whether they are meeting the needs of employers.

4. **Community colleges and vocational schools should encourage all entering students to take placement tests to ensure they enroll in classes that are appropriate for their skill levels.**

Community colleges and vocational schools serve people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to pursue a postsecondary education. It is imperative that these non-traditional students have course placement evaluations available to them to provide an opportunity for success. Course placement evaluations are especially important for students enrolled in academic transfer programs to ensure their smooth transition to four-year institutions.

GOVERNANCE

1. **The citizens of the college district should determine whether their local institution should be a branch college, an independent community college or a technical-vocational school.**

   The citizens of the college district are the best judges of their educational needs and the type of institution which will best meet those needs.

2. **Community colleges and vocational schools must maintain local control to initiate and phase out educational programs in order to remain flexible and responsive to local community needs.**

   Community colleges and vocational schools must be able to allocate their resources to best serve their communities. They have a positive impact on local economic development by being able to meet the training needs of existing business, industry and government and by being able to provide a trained work force for new business and industry.

TUITION

1. **Tuition should remain low.**

   Citizens of the college districts provide significant local financial support to their institutions in ways other than tuition. They pay property taxes which help pay for general operating expenses and capital outlay projects.

   Research shows that when tuition increases, enrollment declines. This deprives certain people of the opportunity to pursue a postsecondary education and weakens the open-access policy of community colleges and vocational schools.

LINKAGES

1. **Interaction with high schools, business, industry and government agencies must be pursued.**

   Community colleges and vocational schools should continue and expand programs in which graduating high school students receive advanced standing in college for specially approved courses they complete during high school. In addition, joint programs between high schools

and community colleges and vocational schools which allow for concurrent enrollment of high school students should continue to be developed.

Community colleges and vocational schools must seek out additional opportunities to provide manpower training programs for government agencies and existing business and industry in New Mexico. They can also have a positive impact on the state's economic development by providing a trained work force which will attract new business and industry to the state.

MARKETING

1. **Community colleges and vocational schools should expand marketing plans to better explain their programs and services to the citizens in their communities and throughout the state.**

   Individual institutions are well known in their communities, but there is a general lack of understanding statewide about the role played by community colleges in New Mexico's system of higher education. If community colleges and vocational schools do a better job of publicizing their programs and services, more New Mexicans will be able to benefit from them.

2. **Community colleges and vocational schools should market the training programs provided by the state's system of two-year institutions.**

   Community colleges and vocational schools should work with state and local economic development agencies to publicize New Mexico's system of two-year institutions, the programs they currently provide, and their ability to develop new training programs to serve the needs of business, industry and government agencies. The community college system can have a major impact on the state's economic development by providing a well-trained work force and attracting new business and industry to New Mexico.

ARTICULATION

1. **Community colleges and four-year colleges and universities must work collectively to improve transfer course agreements to ensure that students transfer smoothly from one institution to another.**

   Most two-year and four-year institutions have not done an adequate job in this area. A large number of community college students pursue an associate degree with the intent of transferring to a four-year baccalaureate program. In addition, a significant number of individuals with some postsecondary education credits, baccalaureate or advanced degrees transfer to community colleges and vocational schools to upgrade or learn new job skills. The transfer process should not handicap anyone. Transfer course agreements should allow for individuals to receive the maximum amount of credit with the least amount of inconvenience.

III. TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

Members of the New Mexico Community College Task Force represent 16 of the 17 community colleges and vocational schools in New Mexico. The Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute did not participate.

Chairman of the Task Force is Santa Fe businessman A. Samuel Adelo, who is retired from the energy industry after serving 27 years as legal counsel and a government relations representative in the United States, Latin America, Europe, Spain, North Africa and the Middle East. He now is president of Adelocorp, Limited, an organization that specializes in foreign language communication and translation services. He also teaches Spanish at Santa Fe Community College.

Members are:

From Alamogordo

Dr. Charles Reidlinger, provost of NMSU Alamogordo Branch College;
Clois A. Ratliff, president of Western Bank;
Billie Holder, retired after 30 years as publisher of the Alamogordo Daily News;

From Belen and Los Lunas

Dr. Omero Suarez, director of UNM Valencia Campus;
David Chavez, attorney and president of the UNM Alumni Association;
Robert J. Davey, chief executive officer of the Valley Improvement Association;
Ellie Fyvertson, editor of the Valencia County News Bulletin;

From Carlsbad

Dr. Shelton W. Marlow, provost of UNM Carlsbad Branch College;
Oran Means, an insurance and real estate agent;
Rudy Sparks, a self-employed businessman and vice president of the Chamber of Commerce;

From Clovis

Dr. Jay Gurley, provost of ENMU Clovis Branch College;
Janie Moberly, member of the ENMU Board of Regents;
Chad Lydick, chairman of the Community Advisory Council

From Espanola and El Rito

Dr. Sigfredo Maestas, president of Northern New Mexico Community College;
Greg Martin, self-employed businessman from El Rito;
Consuelo J. Thompson, mayor of Espanola;

From Farmington

Dr. James Henderson, president of San Juan College;
Boyd Scott, former state legislator and former mayor of Farmington;
Robert Culpepper, an insurance executive and former mayor of Farmington;

From Gallup

Dr. John Phillips, director of UNM Gallup Branch College;
Dani Frye, Gallup city manager and former city councillor;
Stephen Kennedy, a life insurance agent and former legislator;

From Grants

Donaciano Gonzalez, provost of NMSU Grants Branch College;
Eddie Pena, owner of Sunwest Indian Arts and former school board member;
Kenneth Martinez, attorney;

From Hobbs

Dr. Robert A. Anderson, president of New Mexico Junior College;
Dr. Charley R. Smith, chairman of the board of Watson Truck and Supply and a member of the school board;
Bill Lee, a rancher and vice chairman of the New Mexico Highway Commission and a former legislator;

From Las Cruces

Dr. Patricio G. Quintana, provost of NMSU Dona Ana Branch Community College;
Mary Tucker, office manager for a dentist office and a former legislator;
Mary Salopek, part owner and office manager of Ikard Furniture Company and a former member of the school board;

From Las Vegas

Samuel F. Vigil, president of Luna Vocational-Technical Institute;
Charles Sanchez, an insurance agent, member of the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education, a former chairman of the East Las Vegas School Board and former chairman of the Luna Vocational-Technical Institute Board of Directors;

From Los Alamos

Dr. Virginia Higbie, director of the UNM Los Alamos Branch College;
Dr. Raymond Hunter, a judge and associate division leader at Los Alamos National Laboratory;
Mary "Ginger" Welch, a registered nurse, certified entero-therapist and former school board member;

From Roswell

Dr. Loyd R. Hughes, provost of ENMU Roswell Branch College;
Gen. Gerald Childress, superintendent of New Mexico Military Institute;
Steve Henderson, owner of a real estate company;
Carl Schellinger, self-employed businessman and former member of the Planning and Zoning Commission;

From Santa Fe

Dr. William C. Witter, president of Santa Fe Community College;
Dr. James Miller, an educational consultant, past director of the Governor's Office of Education and former superintendent of the Santa Fe Public Schools;
Phillip J. Torres, vice president of Sunwest Bank;

From Tucumcari

O. B. Coffey, vice president of Tucumcari Area Vocational School;
Oscar Hernandez, manager of Southwestern Public Service Company;
Molly Evetts, a self-employed businesswoman and co-owner of an engineering and construction company.

IV. TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

The Task Force held two meetings in Santa Fe, the first on Monday, October 14, 1985, and the second on Wednesday, November 20, 1985. One of the first steps undertaken by the Task Force was to clarify and re-emphasize the mission and goals of New Mexico's community colleges and vocational schools. The Task Force adopted the following mission and goals statement:

"Community colleges and vocational schools are designed to help local citizens achieve their personal educational goals and to meet the job training needs of local business, industry and government. These institutions provide a comprehensive program of educational services including:

- freshman and sophomore level courses with credits that transfer to four-year colleges and universities;
- vocational/technical programs that provide students with basic job skills to enter the work force;
- non-credit community services and continuing education programs for students of all ages seeking professional or personal enrichment;
- special job-training programs designed for the expressed needs of local business and industry;

- Adult Basic Education and developmental education to help students acquire basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics;
- cultural enrichment programs for adults and children;
- programs for qualified high school juniors and seniors who want to take college courses while still in high school; and
- educational support services such as career counseling and library services for all members of the community."

The Task Force also developed a four-page "Fact Sheet" highlighting information that supports the community college and vocational school mission. The Fact Sheet was the primary document circulated by Task Force members in their information campaign (see Attachment C).

After the Task Force's October 14 meeting, members returned to their communities to implement the information campaign. Task Force members took with them Fact Sheets, a brochure titled "New Mexico's Community Colleges and Vocational Schools: Opportunity with Excellence" (this was developed last year by NMACJC) and bumper stickers carrying the slogan "New Mexico's Community Colleges are Growing Places." These materials were distributed to people who were visited.

All of the community activities were designed to accomplish the Task Force's first goal of providing better information to the state's citizens about what New Mexico's community colleges and vocational schools are doing. At the same time, Task Force members were seeking input about the major strengths and weaknesses of these two-year institutions.

A wide variety of activities was completed in each of the communities represented by the Task Force. A summary of these activities is provided below.

Media Contacts

Media people were contacted throughout the state because they are a major source of information for New Mexico citizens and because they have the ability to reach large audiences. Newspaper, radio and television reporters, editors, managers and owners were contacted. All of them expressed an interest in the Task Force's activities. News stories about the Task Force were published in newspapers and aired on radio and television broadcasts. Task Force members wrote letters to the editor and guest columns for their local newspaper and made appearances on television and radio interviews and talk shows. Free public service announcements were aired in cooperation with radio stations.

Speaking Engagements

Task Force members arranged to speak to various groups and organizations in their respective communities. They talked about the Task Force and emphasized information on the Fact Sheet. Task Force members also spoke personally to friends and colleagues. Among the groups contacted were: local chambers of commerce; local Kiwanis clubs; Rotary clubs; Lion's clubs; Retired Teachers Associations; the National Guard; Civitans clubs; public school boards; city and county officials; Community Advisory Councils; and high school counselors and teachers.

Advertising

In some communities, free public service announcements were supplemented with paid advertisements. Ads were placed with local radio stations and newspapers to provide new insights into the advantages of attending a community college. Some colleges are implementing image advertising campaigns.

College Contacts

Faculty and students were asked to help with the Task Force information campaign because of their personal experiences at a community college or vocational school. In addition to being asked to help "spread the word," they were asked to give feedback about the perceived strengths and weaknesses of their institution. Former students were asked to provide testimonials about their college successes. Information about the Task Force and its activities was reported in various campus newsletters.

Legislative Contacts

Task Force members made personal visits and wrote letters to their local legislators to keep them informed of the Task Force's activities. Task Force members will again be visiting their local representatives to review this final report.

Questionnaires/Surveys

Some Task Force members conducted informal surveys in their communities to assess the perceived strengths and weaknesses of their institutions. Information gathered from these surveys was helpful in developing the Task Force recommendations.

Summary of Community Contacts

In all of the community contacts, the overall reception was good. Many community leaders indicated that they would help disseminate information about the state's two-year institutions. The Task Force members believe the information campaign was successful and people are now better informed about New Mexico's community colleges and vocational schools. They concluded that these kinds of activities must continue in order to maintain a heightened awareness of the state's two-year institutions.

TWENTY FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS, 1982-95

Occupation	Percent Growth in Employment
Computer service technicians	96.8
Legal assistants	94.3
Computer systems analysts	85.3
Computer programmers	76.9
Computer operators	75.8
Office machine repairers	71.7
Physical therapy assistants	67.8
Electrical engineers	65.3
Civil engineering technicians	63.9
Peripheral EDP equipment operators	63.5
Insurance clerks, medical	62.2
Electrical and electronic technicians	60.7
Occupational therapists	59.8
Surveyor helpers	58.6
Credit clerks, banking and insurance	54.1
Physical therapists	53.6
Employment interviewers	52.5
Mechanical engineers	52.1
Mechanical engineering technicians	51.6
Compression and injection mold machine operators, plastics	50.3

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, "Employment Projections for 1995," Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1984.

NEW MEXICO OCCUPATIONS WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB OPENINGS 1981-1990

Occupation	Annual Job Openings
All other managers	4,230
Sales clerks	2,500
Janitors, porters and cleaners	2,180
All other unskilled laborers	2,160
Kitchen helpers	1,960
Secretary	1,870
All other sales workers	1,860
Cashier	1,740
Waiter and/or waitress	1,580
General clerk, office	1,450
Teachers, elementary or preschool	1,420
Truck Driver	1,300
All other semiskilled workers	910
Supervisory, nonworking production	900
Bookkeeper, hand	870
Helper, trades	870
Nurse aide and/or orderly	840
Stock clerk, stockroom	820
Nurse, professional	750
Teacher, secondary school	750
Electrical and electronic assemblers	750
All other office clerical workers	750
Electrical and electronic technicians	720
Typists	700
Mechanic, automotive	700
Manager, restaurant	670
Delivery and/or route worker	670
Counter attendant, lunchroom	650
Manager, store	640
Stock clerk, sales floor	610
Carpenter	610
Heavy equipment operator	580
Fuel pump attendant	570
Food preparation and/or service worker	550
Maintenance repairer, general utility	550
Accountants and auditors	510
Teacher aide	500
Cook, restaurant	500
Accounting clerk	480
Dining room attendant	470
Guards and doorkeepers	450
Teller	450
Receptionist	430
All other service workers	420
Teacher, college or junior college	410
Welders and flamecutters	400

Source: New Mexico Employment Security Department, "Jobs to 1990," September 1982.

New Mexico Community College Task Force

Attachment C

P.O. Box 4187
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FACT SHEET

What Is A Community College/Vocational School?

Community colleges and vocational schools are designed to help local citizens achieve their personal educational goals and to meet the job training needs of local business, industry and government. These institutions provide:

- freshman and sophomore level courses with credits that transfer to four-year colleges and universities
- vocational/technical programs that provide students with basic job skills to enter the workforce
- non-credit community services and continuing education programs for students of all ages seeking professional or personal enrichment
- special job-training programs designed for the expressed needs of local business and industry
- Adult Basic Education and developmental education to help students acquire basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics
- cultural enrichment programs for adults and children
- programs for high school juniors and seniors who want to take college courses while still in high school
- learning resources such as career counseling and library services to all members of the community

New Mexico Has 17 Community Colleges and Vocational Schools Throughout The State:

Albuquerque Technical Vocational Institute
ENMU - Clovis Branch College
ENMU - Roswell Branch College
Luna Vocational Technical Institute - Las Vegas
New Mexico Junior College - Hobbs
New Mexico Military Institute - Roswell
NMSU - Alamogordo Branch College
NMSU - Carlsbad Branch College
NMSU - Dona Ana Occupational Branch
NMSU - Grants Branch College

Northern New Mexico Community College - El Rito, Espanola
San Juan College - Farmington
Santa Fe Community College
Tucumcari Area Vocational School
UNM - Gallup Branch College
UNM - Los Alamos Branch Community College
UNM - Valencia County Community College

These are the major characteristics of two-year community colleges and vocational schools:

OPEN ACCESS . . . . .

- Community colleges have an open-admissions policy which provides access to quality education for all New Mexico's citizens regardless of age; sex; race; economic, cultural or physical condition; previous educational experience; or geographic location.

- Enrollments at community colleges and vocational schools have increased dramatically since the 1970s.

    1. Nationally, there are about 4.6 million students enrolled in community colleges, up from 2.1 million in 1970.

    2. In New Mexico, there are currently 34,329 students enrolled in two-year institutions, up from 19,713 in 1979.

- Community colleges and vocational schools are serving people who might not otherwise pursue higher education.

    1. Out of 40 million students in elementary and secondary schools nationwide, 11 million will not complete high school. The community college is specially designed to serve this population.

    2. 70% of women who are returning to school are going back to the community college. 80 to 90% of all minority students in higher education nationwide begin their studies at a community college.

    3. The average age of the community college student is 29. Many attend college in their own hometown while working and raising a family. Community colleges offer classes during convenient day and evening hours to accommodate diverse working schedules.

- Most New Mexicans live within driving distance of a community college.

AFFORDABLE . . . . .

For students:

- Tuition at New Mexico's community colleges is affordable, ranging from $0 to $13 per credit hour.

- Students can live at home and save money for their future needs.

For New Mexico:

- New Mexico's community colleges receive only 12% of the total state appropriation for higher education and less than 2% of the total state budget.

- The state pays $2,750 per full-time student annually for education at New Mexico's community colleges, compared with $4,240 at the four-year universities.

QUALITY . . . . .

- The community college focus is on instruction and learning rather than faculty research and publication.

- More than 74% of community college faculty hold a master's degree and 15% a doctorate.

- Community colleges provide students with personalized support services such as academic and career counseling, tutoring and job placement assistance to help them attain their educational goals.

- New Mexico's community colleges and vocational schools are accredited by nationally recognized organizations which enables students to transfer to four-year universities.

- Classes are small so that students receive individual attention.

RESPONSIVE AND FLEXIBLE . . . . .

- Community colleges respond quickly to meet local educational needs in New Mexico's changing economic environment.

- New Mexico's community colleges are developing innovative partnerships with business, industry and area high schools. These are just a few examples:

    1. Community colleges are cooperating with New Mexico's restaurant industry to provide classroom and on-the-job training for aspiring chefs and cooks. Students can become certified cooks by the American Culinary Federation and work toward an associate degree or certificate in culinary arts.

2. An associate degree program in surveying was developed in direct response to a request from the New Mexico State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors. Students can now stay in New Mexico to receive the training in surveying that is required to take the state registration examination.

3. Community colleges and area high schools are initiating programs in which high school students, upon graduation, can receive advanced standing in college for specially approved courses they completed during high school.

- Nationally, community colleges are in the forefront in using new instructional technologies such as cable and broadcast television, video and audio cassettes, interactive computer systems and other types of telecommunications to supplement existing instructional methods.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES . . . . .

- The associate degree is becoming the preferred degree for entry into many technical occupations.

  1. Nationally, of the 20 fastest growing occupations through 1995, 18 will prefer two years or less of training provided by community colleges and vocational schools.

  2. In New Mexico, only 7 out of 46 occupations that have the largest number of annual job openings require a four-year baccalaureate degree. The rest require two years or less of training provided by community colleges and vocational schools. High-demand jobs include: nurses, secretaries, bookkeepers, electronics and electrical technicians, office clerical workers, carpenters, heavy equipment operators, restaurant managers, cooks, accounting clerks, and welders.

- Graduates of New Mexico's community colleges and vocational schools are finding jobs. After completing their vocational training at a New Mexico two-year institution, more than 80% of those students seeking jobs in 1983 found employment in their respective fields.

- New Mexico's community colleges and vocational schools have a tremendous economic impact on the state. An educated and suitably trained workforce is an important factor in attracting business and industry to New Mexico. The state's community colleges are an important resource for training and retraining employees.

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES
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